IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A ball-and-socket joint, comprising:

a housing;

a bearing shell inserted into said housing;

a ball pivot with a joint ball mounted pivotally in all directions in said bearing shell;

a sealing bellows between the housing and the ball pivot, said sealing bellows having a pivot-side edge area;

a ball race fixed on said ball pivot; and

a sliding ring receiving said pivot-side edge area of said sealing bellows, said sliding ring being ~~slidingly~~ mounted to slide in said ball race ~~and having~~ , said sliding ring having a sliding ~~face~~ surface facing the joint ball arranged adjacent to the ball race.

2. (Original) A ball-and-socket joint in accordance with claim 1, wherein:

said sliding ring includes a collar made in one piece with said sliding ring.

3. (Original) A joint in accordance with claim 2, wherein:

said collar engages said pivot-side edge area of said sealing bellows.

4. (Original) A joint in accordance with claim 2, wherein:

said collar is made in one piece with an inner side of said sliding ring, said sliding ring cooperates with said pivot-side edge area of said sealing bellows in at least some areas.

5. (Original) A joint in accordance with claim 1, wherein:

said sliding ring includes an axial extension and a radial extension.

6. (Original) A joint in accordance with claim 1, wherein:

said race and said sliding ring define a gap between said race and said sliding ring.

7. (Original) A joint in accordance with claim 5, wherein:

said race and said sliding ring define a gap between said axial extension and a surface of said ball race.

8. (Original) A ball-and-socket joint in accordance with claim 7, wherein:

said sliding ring has an approximately L-shaped cross section comprising an axial leg as said axial extension and a radial leg as said radial extension, said radial leg is in sliding contact with an inner surface of said ball race.

9. (Original) A ball-and-socket joint in accordance with claim 1, wherein:

said ball race has an approximately U-shaped cross section.

10. (Original) A ball-and-socket joint in accordance with claim 1, wherein:

said sealing bellows has a surface slidingly in contact with a surface of said ball race.

11. (Original) A ball-and-socket joint in accordance with claim 10, wherein:

said surface of said sealing bellows which is in contact with said surface of said ball race has a sealing lip in contact with said surface of said ball race.

12. (Original) A ball-and-socket joint in accordance with claim 10, wherein:

said surface of said sealing bellows which is in contact with said surface of said ball race forms a labyrinth seal together with said surface of said ball race.

13. (Original) A ball-and-socket joint in accordance with claim 10, wherein:

said surface of said sealing bellows which is in contact with said surface of said ball race has a sealing lip and a second surface of said sealing bellows forms a labyrinth seal together with said surface of said ball race.

14. (Original) A ball-and-socket joint in accordance with claim 5, wherein:

said sliding ring is a shaped sheet metal part or a plastic molding;

said sliding ring receives and holds a portion of said sealing bellows between said radial and axial extensions;

said radial and axial extensions are substantially perpendicular to each other;

said ball race is fixed to said ball pivot.

15. (Original) A ball-and-socket joint in accordance with claim 1, wherein:

said ball race has a leg which is in contact with said sliding ring, said leg comprising lugs arranged at spaced locations from one another.

16. (Original) A ball-and-socket joint in accordance with claim 1, wherein:

said sliding ring has at least one radially extending slot.

17. (Original) A ball-and-socket joint in accordance with claim 1, wherein:

said pivot-side edge area of said sealing bellows forms a thickened material bead, which is pressed against said ball race or said sliding ring with an elastic pretension.

18. (Original) A joint in accordance with claim 1, wherein:

said sliding ring has a disk shape.

19. (Original) A joint in accordance with claim 1, wherein:

said sliding ring is slotted.

20. (Original) A ball-and-socket joint in accordance with claim 1, wherein:

said sliding ring has an approximately L shaped cross section.

21. (Original) A ball-and-socket joint in accordance with claim 1, wherein:

said sliding ring has an approximately T shaped cross section.

22. (Original) A ball-and-socket joint in accordance with claim 1, wherein:

said sliding ring has an approximately F shaped cross section.

23. (Original) A ball-and-socket joint in accordance with claim 1, wherein:

said sliding ring is vulcanized directly to said pivot-side edge area of said sealing bellows.

24. (Currently Amended) A ball-and-socket joint sealing connection for a joint having a housing, a bearing shell inserted into the housing and a ball pivot with a joint ball mounted movably in all directions in the bearing shell, the joint sealing connection comprising:

a sealing bellows connected between the housing and the ball pivot, said sealing bellows having a pivot-side edge area;

a ~~ball~~ race fixed on said ball pivot; and

a sliding ring receiving the pivot-side edge area of said sealing bellows, said sliding ring including an axial extension and a radial extension, said sliding ring being ~~slidingly~~ connected to said ~~ball~~ race and slidable relative to said race to slide and move relative to said race ~~and having a sliding face facing the joint ball arranged adjacent to the ball race~~.

25. (Currently Amended) A ball-and-socket joint, comprising:

a housing;

a bearing shell arranged in said housing

a ball pivot with a joint ball mounted pivotally in said bearing shell;

a sealing bellows arranged between said housing and said ball pivot, said sealing bellows including a pivot-side edge area;

a race fixed on said ball pivot; and

a sliding ring receiving said pivot-side edge area of said sealing bellows, said sliding ring being ~~slidingly~~ arranged in said race for sliding movement of said pivot-side edge area and said sliding ring relative to said race.

26. (Currently Amended) A joint in accordance with claim 25, wherein:

said sliding ring has a sliding ~~face~~ surface facing the joint ball and arranged adjacent to said race, said sliding ~~face~~ surface of said ring sliding ~~around~~ relative to said race.

27. (Currently Amended) A joint in accordance with claim 25, wherein:

said sliding ring is ~~rotatable around~~ movable relative to said race and said ball pivot in rotational direction as to a central axis of said ball pivot.